

TOWN OF ENNIS STUDY COMMISSION FINAL REPORT

To the Citizens of the Town of Ennis:

The Town of Ennis Study Commission elected by the voters on November 2, 2004, or thereafter appointed, present this final report to you, the citizens of this town.

The purpose of the study commission, as defined in state law, is "to study the existing form and powers of our town government and procedures for delivery of local government services and compare them with other forms available under the laws of the state". If some change is deemed necessary, the study commission may submit such proposed change to the electors.

In every phase of this review this study commission sought advice and information from as many people in the city as possible. Opinions and recommendations were solicited from local government officials, community organizations and citizens. All meetings of the study commission were open to the public. An informational news article was published in the Madisonian. Public hearings were held to determine citizen opinion, but attendance was poor. As a surrogate for public participation, we utilized opinions expressed by town residents in a survey conducted by the Town of Ennis Planning Board in 2004. This survey included questions regarding most of the town services and functions.

As a result of input from the people and groups mentioned, the Town of Ennis Study Commission concluded there is general consensus that the existing town commission form of government has served this community well since its organization in 1976, and will continue to do so in the future. We therefore recommend no change in this form of government. We do offer the council and mayor the following recommendations for their consideration.

Recommendation 1: Public Meetings

Since the ratification of the "CERTIFICATE ESTABLISHING THE RATIFIED PLAN OF GOVERNMENT FOR THE TOWN OF ENNIS" in 1976, State Law on public meetings has changed. Section 2.01(9) no longer conforms with law.

We suggest the following amendment to the charter.

Section 2.01 (9):

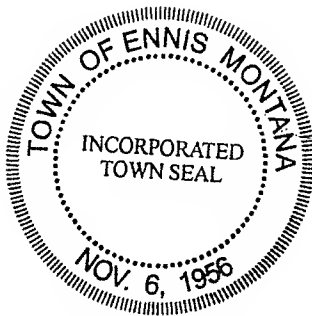
Delete all after "*Such meetings shall*" and insert "*be open to the public, except as provided by law, and public notice shall be provided as required by law*".

In lieu of amending the charter, which would require approval through an election, we recommend the commission establish a policy to assure the most current law is met on public meetings.

Recommendation 2: Employees required to live within city boundaries

In 1996, the voting citizens of the Town of Ennis amended the town's charter (Certificate establishing the Ratified Plan of Government for the Town of Ennis) on three counts. One of those amendments continues to be discussed by residents and the Council itself. That amendment requires "*employees of the local government of the Town of Ennis shall be bona fide residents within the boundaries of Ennis during the period of their employment by the Town of Ennis.*" The Council is concerned this requirement limits the pool of qualified candidates they can consider for skilled, highly trained and hard to fill positions like the City Clerk and City Law Enforcement Officer. The residents who voiced concerns about this feel they expressed their will with a successful vote for the amendment. They are concerned the Council has already made an exception to the amendment by allowing an employee to move out of the city boundaries.

This Local Government Study Commission feels this question needs to be re-evaluated but the time is not "ripe" yet. Voters may need to feel enough time has elapsed to give the amendment a true test before throwing it out. We recommend that the next Local Government Study Commission convened gives serious consideration to this issue.



Respectfully submitted on _____

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